

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8911
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION EC
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 0756

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS, BE
SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST AND EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE

REFS: (A) PARIS 1502, (B) EC BRUSSELS 554, (C) BONN 1239

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTRY'S MIDDLE EAST DIRECTOR SEES "NO
HARM" IN DISCUSSING POLITICAL ISSUES - INCLUDING MIDDLE EAST
SETTLEMENT - IN CONTEXT OF EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE. ISRAELI
AMBASSADOR EXPRESSES CONCERN AT "CLEAR EROSION" OF
EUROPEAN POSITION ON EVE OF FEBRUARY TUNIS EURO-ARAB
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DIALOGUE SESSION. END SUMMARY.

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR FOR MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS
(AMBASSADOR PATERNOTTE), MOST LIKELY EXPRESSING HIS
PERSONAL VIEWS RATHER THAN CONSIDERED GOB POSITION, HELD FORTH
TO US JANUARY 24 ON THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE. HE SAID HE
SAW "NO HARM" IN EXCHANGING POLITICAL VIEWS WITH ARABS

IN CONTEXT OF THE DIALOGUE AND MAINTAINED THAT ARAB COUNTRIES WERE NOT SEEKING TO DRAW EUROPEANS INTO MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BUT SOUGHT ONLY AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS. IF KEY MIDDLE EASTERN QUESTIONS ARE DEBATED ALMOST DAILY IN UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORA, HE ASKED, WHY NOT IN THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE? HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT TO "ANTAGONIZE" THOSE ARABS WHO HAD SHOWN THEMSELVES MORE MODERATE LAST YEAR AT NAIROBI AND IN UN, AND CITED SAUDI ARABIA AS HAVING ASSUMED "SERIOUS RISKS" IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS.

2. PATERNOTTE CONTENDED THAT EUROPEANS WERE BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT "DILLY-DALLYING FOR YEARS" ON QUESTION OF MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WAS LEADING NOWHERE, AND WERE CONVINCED THAT "CONDITIONS IN 1977 WERE CONDUCTIVE TO SOLUTION". AS EXAMPLES HE CITED:

--NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON

-- MONDALE MISSION

-- VANCE TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST

-- END OF LEBANESE WAR

-- SYRIA AND EGYPT BACK TOGETHER

-- PALESTINIANS "BROUGHT TO HEEL"

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-- FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS IN ISRAEL

REFERRING TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON AND PRESS REPORTS OF FORTHCOMING MIDDLE EAST TRIP BY SECRETARY VANCE, PATERNOTTE SAID EC-9 SHOULD "NOT BE KEPT IN THE DARK" ON US PLANS FOR MIDEAST LEST IT FALL "OUT OF STEP" WITH US.

3. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR PATERNOTTE, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON AND JORDAN, HAS A TRACK RECORD WITH US OF AFFINITY FOR ARAB CAUSES AND ANTIPATHY TOWARD ISRAELI INTERESTS. ALTHOUGH HE IS BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE AT EC-9 EXPERT'S MEETING, HE EXPRESSES VIEWS TO US AT TIMES THAT DON'T TURN OUT TO BE BELGIUM'S ON EC'S. END COMMENT.

4. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM (BEN-HORIN) TOLD US THIS WEEK THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT "CLEAR EROSION" OF EUROPEAN POSITION ON EVE OF FEBRUARY EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE MEETING IN TUNIS. HE SAID THAT EUROPEAN POLITICAL

STATEMENT, AS DRAFTED BY EC-9 EXPERTS AT THEIR JANUARY 14 LONDON MEETING AND DUE TO BE SUBMITTED TO POLITICAL DIRECTORS THIS WEEK AND FOREIGN MINISTERS WEEK OF JANUARY 31, WENT WELL BEYOND EC-9 POSITION AT EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE SESSION IN LUXEMBOURG LAST MAY AND EVEN FARTHER THAN AMBASSADOR WAGNER'S "APOLOGETIC" RESPONSE TO ARAB QUESTIONS ON BEHALF OF NINE AT THAT SESSION. THE REFERENCE TO "SECURE BOUNDARIES" IN EXPERTS' DRAFT WAS FINE AS FAR AS IT WENT BUT WAS "NOTHING NEW" AND DID NOT COMPENSATE FOR "EROSION" IN OTHER SECTIONS OF DRAFT. AMBASSADOR BEN-HORIN ATTRIBUTED EUROPE'S "WEAKNESS" ON DIALOGUE ISSUE TO EXTENSIVE BUREAUCRACY - BOTH AT COMMISSION AND IN THE NINE'S FOREIGN MINISTRIES - COMMITTED TO KEEPING THE DIALOGUE GOING AT ALL COST AND THUS WILLING TO COMPROMISE WITH ARABS ON ANY ISSUE, INCLUDING QUESTION OF POLITICAL CONTENT, IF NECESSARY.

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5. BEN-HORIN PREDICTED THAT ARABS, CORRECTLY ASSESSING "LACK OF EUROPEAN BACKBONE", WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS THEIR ADVANTAGE. HE SAID ISRAEL'S AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAD DISCUSSED MATTER WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN IN DECEMBER, AND ISRAELIS WERE IN PROCESS OF MAKING DEMARCHES IN LONDON, BONN, THE HAGUE, AND (MAYBE) COPENHAGEN. THE MESSAGE WAS: IF EUROPEANS CONTINUE TO WOO ARABS AT ISRAELI EXPENSE, ISRAEL WOULD DISCOUNT TO ZERO PIOUS EUROPEAN RHETORIC ABOUT MIDDLE EAST PEACE. RENNER

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